

INFORMATION REPORT

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ADMINISTRATION

1. The control and administration of the penal institutions of Egypt are vested in a Department of Prisons, under the Minister of War and Marine. Prison officials, from the Director of the Department down through all administrative and directive posts, are all graduates either of the Police or Military Academy and the career is essentially regarded as a military service. The cost of administration, operation and maintenance of prisons comes out of the budget of the Ministry of War and Marine.
2. The Director of the Department of Prisons has absolute control over prison administration. He is aided by a small headquarters staff which includes a psychiatrist, a social service worker and numerous administrative assistants. The director of the penal institutions simply implement the policy laid down by the Director of the Department and have independent judgement only in matters of discipline, although even in this respect his conduct must conform to standards laid down by the Director of the Department.

TYPE OF INSTITUTIONS

3. The physical plants of all adult prisons in Egypt are of maximum security type, i. e., the prison grounds are walled in, heavily guarded, and secured with heavy locks and bars. Prisoners are never left unguarded. In all, there are 21 adult penal institutions in Egypt. There are 14 district or general prisons in 14 of Egypt's 16 political districts, a general prison in Alexandria and Cairo, two long-term penitentiaries, a reformatory and two small prisons for short-termers in the suburbs of Cairo. Within these institutions, as of July 1953, there were approximately 20 thousand prisoners, of which about two thousand were women. About 80 per cent of the inmates were convicted of crimes against property, such as theft, robbery, burglary, etc. The balance were convicted of crimes against persons, such as murder, assault, sex offenses, drug addiction and a very few political offenses.

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CONDITIONS

4. All adult institutions are of the dormitory type. A varying number of prisoners are confined in large rooms. Conditions are very frugal, but somewhat better than the standard of living of the average inmate. Two factors contribute to this. First, the Prison Administration has a limited financial budget. Second and more important, if the prison standard of comfort were made appreciably more attractive than the average inmate is accustomed to, every one would want to be a prisoner and the crime rate would increase.
5. Prisoners sleep on the floor on rugs supplied by the institute. In addition to the rug, each inmate is given three blankets. While there is no uniform number in each room, there is never more than one foot between prisoners when they are sleeping on their rugs.

DAILY ROUTINE

6. Daily routine of inmates is as follows: Arise at 5:30 am in the summer or 6:30 am in the winter. Arrange bedding, wash and receive breakfast which is eaten in the dormitory. There is no such thing as a mess hall. Day's work begins at 7:00 am in the summer, 7:30 am in the winter. Work will depend upon the individual institution, but except for the long term penitentiaries where all work is confined to stone cutting it is mostly of a vocational nature, such as carpentry, textile work, tailoring, black-smithing, washing, cooking, baking etc. Each phase of work is guided by a technical teacher. From 12:00 to 1:00 pm the inmates have lunch on the job, wherever that may happen to be. Work is then resumed until 3:30 pm at which time the prisoners are required to wash, assemble for counting and receive their dinner, which is eaten in the dormitory. Dormitories are locked up at 5:00 pm in the summer and 6:00 pm in the winter.
7. Recreation time is limited to Thursday mornings (till 12 noon) and all day Friday. On Thursday mornings the prisoners are not required to work and are allowed one hour of parade time (walking outdoors). On Fridays they are not required to work at all and are permitted one hour of parade time in the morning and one hour in the afternoon.

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE

8. Each prison is equipped with a school to implement the national program of defeating illiteracy. These schools are staffed and supervised by the Ministry of Education, but under the control of the Department of Prisons. Every prisoner under 40 years of age who is illiterate is required to study in the school at least two hours of each working day and must continue to study until he earns a certificate attesting his ability to read and write and to do simple arithmetic problems. The standard for the certificate is equal to about third grade in a primary school in the US. These schools are the nearest thing Egypt's penal institutions have to a social service program. Except for them, there is no social service available to adult prisoners. There is a social service bureau in the headquarters organization, but its staff concentrates all of its efforts on juvenile delinquents.

MEDICAL

9. Every prison has at least one doctor. Some will have as many as three. Doctors are assisted by male graduate nurses. Each prison also has its own clinic and hospital and these are usually equipped to handle everything but the most serious cases of illness. Serious cases are removed

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to the nearest city hospital. Psychiatric service is woefully inadequate. There is only one trained psychiatrist for the entire penal system and he is supposed to visit each of the institutions at least once every month to treat serious cases of mental and personality abnormalities. In practice, however, he can't possibly do it. The job is too much for one man.

RECREATION

10. Recreation for adult prisoners is rigidly limited. On feast days the prisoners are given special foods, a few prisons have a radio which prisoners occasionally may listen to and a very few prisons have social activities arranged by socially minded officers. For example, one prison officer has encouraged the prisoners to publish their own newspaper under officer supervision. There are no library facilities but prisoners may get ^{any} book from the outside through friend or family provided it is not indecent or politically dangerous.

DISCIPLINE AND PRIVILEGES

11. Discipline is restrictive. Prisoners have very little freedom. Everyone is watched at all times, both by a trustee inmate and a professional guard. There is no such thing as an honor system in any penal institution of Egypt. Smoking has been allowed to the prisoners since two years ago but the number of cigarettes is limited to five per inmate per day. No special food is allowed from the outside unless recommended for health reasons by the prison doctor. Each prisoner may have three visitors once each month. Visits are made through bars. Each prisoner may also write letters once every two weeks if he so desires.
12. Inmates who break rules or who are unruly are first warned, then punished either by separate confinement in a cell block from one to seven days or by taking away privileges, such as smoking, visitors and letter writing. Serious breaches may result in whippings, but before the prison officials may resort to this extreme the prisoner is given an impartial trial by the prison administration and the decision to whip must have the approval of the Director of the Department of Prisons. [REDACTED] there was much talk about abolishing whippings altogether and they may now actually be abolished.

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RELIGIOUS OPPORTUNITY

13. Inmates are given every opportunity for religious expression. Each prison has a mosque and a Moslem preacher who is available for spiritual advice. On Sundays a Christian preacher visits each prison for the benefit of the inmates of Christian faith (about 10 per cent).

RELEASE FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR

14. A prisoner sentenced for one year or more may earn what we call a "Release on Condition". That is to say, if his conduct and performance have, in every way, been exemplary for three quarters of his term of sentence he may earn a final release. No probationary limitations are attached to this release.

PRISONERS AWAITING TRIAL

15. Persons who are incarcerated while awaiting trial have many more privileges than convicted prisoners. They are confined in separate quarters in the regular prisons, but may sleep on beds, have good food, wear

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regular clothes, smoke, read etc., provided they can afford to pay for all these things themselves. It is the policy of the Prison Administration not to inflict the harsh disciplinary measures on prisoners whose guilt is yet to be proved. However, such prisoners must obey the rules and are subjected to the same punishment for violations as any other prisoner.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

16. The treatment of prisoners in general will vary with the individual officer in charge. Some are exceedingly harsh and others are very kind. However, prisoners may not be treated unreasonably. Surprise inspections are frequently made by the Director of Prisons and he will dismiss officers summarily if he finds they are treating prisoners with undue cruelty.

WOMEN PRISONERS

17. Women prisoners are confined in the same institutions as men, except in the long term penitentiaries, but in separate wings. They have their own staff, all female, and are subject to the same rules, routine, conditions and discipline as the male prisoners.

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